

AGENDA ITEM: Resource Libraries Program Development**GENERAL OVERALL PROGRAM UPDATE:**

During the last year, the majority of Library of California activity has been focussed on the development of regional library networks, the creation of infrastructure elements to support operations, and the initiation of statewide service pilots and programs. The board identified that the Statewide Resource Libraries component of the Act is a priority that must begin to be developed, and the Board directed staff to report on the development of this component on a regular basis.

Since the last board meeting, staff has updated the Major Resource Libraries Contact list, which is appended as Exhibit A. To create this list, staff began with the 1996 definition of a resource library which used collection size as the principal measure for determining participation. All libraries over 1.5 million volumes were in this initial group. Staff determined that if the list were to be used to identify contacts to participate in a discussion of what a resource library should be, it should be broadened beyond the existing libraries. As a result, all of the University of California and California State University libraries were included. In addition, staff also revisited the list of major public libraries, and included those libraries that were approaching a million volume and/or which were acting as the primary public library resource for their geographic area. This broadened list was used as the contact list for the Resource Libraries Retreat held in Sacramento on October 11, 2000.

26 representatives of resource libraries attended the retreat. The agenda was developed to provide current information on the status of the Library of California and an overview of the elements of the Library of California Act which pertain to resource libraries, and to elicit comments on how the statewide resource libraries component should be defined and developed.

Small group discussions in the morning clearly identified program elements that were desirable for inclusion: reference, interlibrary loan, preservation, online database services, and other service-related elements. What also arose from this session was a general concern about program definitions, the roles and responsibilities of resource libraries, and compensation to be provided for delivering services through this program. The one suggestion that was common to all groups was that definitions were needed to continue discussion, and that the resource libraries themselves should create a steering group to work with staff in constructing program elements and definitions.

During the afternoon, three of the four small groups decided that this definitional element was the topic that they wished to pursue. Resulting from their discussions was the generation of a revised approach for addressing resource libraries and their services. The concept which emerged focussed on services rather than on libraries. There are services which resource libraries could provide, and a library could choose to provide one or more

than one service. Each service would need definitions, criteria for participation, units of measure definitions, and other relevant parts developed. Because the program would be focussing on a specific service, a library with a small but in-depth collection might elect to be a participant. There was also discussion about levels of participation, levels of service delivery and levels of compensation or reimbursement. The entire group concurred that this was a concept that should be pursued, and asked that a steering group be created to work with staff to identify several possible program areas for which models might be constructed. They asked that the group be polled to choose a model to pursue, and then that the steering group flesh out the model so that it could be presented to the Library of California Board as a possible pilot program for funding in 2001/02.

What has emerged from this meeting is a significant change in potential program definition. Rather than identifying large libraries to deliver an array of services on a statewide basis, the group recommended that the focus should be on services which require greater resources than are available on the regional level. Libraries with significant resources, and who met program participation criteria, would be able to select themselves as service providers, and would then be eligible to receive compensation for services delivered through this program. This moves the focus from a monolithic giant library model to a service delivery model that has the potential for integrating with the emerging local and regional service models.

NEXT STEPS:

- Staff is creating a transcript of the Major Resource Libraries Retreat that is to be distributed to libraries identified on the list.
- Staff will work with these libraries to identify representatives to serve on a steering group.
- Staff and the steering group will identify several program areas which could be modeled as pilot programs, and poll the list to identify which program should be studied.
- Staff and the steering group will develop program criteria and present the model to the Board for discussion and for potential funding as a pilot program.

RELATED ISSUES TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD IN THE FUTURE:

1. Update on development of the Resource Libraries component, including the development of possible pilots for testing elements of this program.
2. Consideration of models and pilots for funding the Resource Libraries program components.

Relevant Committee: Access Services
Staff Liaison: Diana Paque

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